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CONTACT:

Geoff LaTendresse  
Division Chief  
City of Fremont Fire Department  
(510) 494-4224  
(510) 494-4287 (Fax)  
[glatendresse@ci.fremont.ca.us](mailto:glatendresse@ci.fremont.ca.us)

***Fremont Fire Department Recognizes Captain Michael Avila  
as the 2004 Firefighter of the Year***

**Fremont, CA** – October 20, 2004 – Captain Michael Avila has been awarded the Fremont Fire Department's Firefighter of the Year award for 2004. Captain Avila began his employment with the City of Fremont on January 14, 1980, after gaining fire service experience in the Fairview Fire Protection District, Piedmont Fire Department and the Union City Fire Department. On January 1, 1985 he was promoted to the rank of Captain.

Over the course of Captain Avila's career he has played major roles in the development of the Department's Wildland Firefighting equipment, the Department's Hose Evolution Binder and in the design and delivery of the Department's Confined Space Awareness Rescue training that was delivered to more than 220 employees.

In addition, during the 1990's Captain Avila conducted four (4) separate Firefighter Recruit Academies for entry-level employees. He also played a key role in the rescue efforts involving the collapse of the Cypress Structure in Oakland after the Loma Prieta earthquake.

Captain Avila is currently assigned as the Project Manager of the Fire Department's Building Program. The Building Program was instituted following the passage of Measure R, which is aimed at seismically retrofitting/remodeling seven of the existing ten (10) Fire Stations, relocating three (3) others and building a new Fire Department Training Center. He currently is a member of the FEMA California Area Task Force – 4 (CATF-4) Urban Search and Rescue Team based out of Oakland, California.

Captain Avila has had a profound and steady influence on the Fremont Fire Department. His skill, experience, leadership, tenacity and dedication to this community through exemplary service will continue to positively influence the employees of this Department for generations of Firefighters to come.

*For more information on Captain Avila or the Department's Firefighter of the Year Award contact Division Chief Geoff LaTendresse at (510) 494-4224.*

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